

SAFETY ALERT

Recently, the Army lost two soldiers and injured 13 others in a tragic 105 mm artillery accident. While conducting a calibration mission, the artillery unit did not follow established firing procedures when conducting live fire. As a result, a round impacted 930 meters short of its intended target. While there are numerous factors involved in this accident, the following information requires immediate attention.

Reference MILPER message 01-163, the MOS conversion of 13C and 13E into 13D is based upon the final fielding of AFATDS. Commanders must be aware that 13D MOS training has not yet been incorporated into the schoolhouse POI. Currently, AFATDS New Equipment Training (NET) and unit level manual gunnery training is the only training available for this conversion process from 13C/E to 13D. Commanders must be aware that while manual gunnery training and AFATDS NET can teach a 13C the mechanics behind manual gunnery, it may be inadequate to qualify a 13C to fulfill traditional 13E FDC NCOIC responsibilities at battery level. Commanders should carefully consider the level of training and qualification of 13C personnel recently reclassified to 13D before certification and qualification in a battery level Fire Direction Center. Concurrently with the MOS reclassification, selected artillery units are undergoing fielding of the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS), version 99.Oscar. A limited safety release message on AFATDS states that units must adhere to all standard policies and procedures for live-fire to include verifying all data put into AFATDS via another approved method (Battery Computer System and/or manual computations). Commanders must be aware that AFATDS V99.Oscar has a built-in default of zero altitude if target altitude is not entered. A CECOM Safety Alert, and Amendment 1 to Safety Confirmation for the non-First Digitized Division (non-FDD) Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System 99 (AFATDS 99), published by the U.S. Army Developmental Test Command (DTC), dated 10 April 2002, provides a warning to operators of this software behavior shortfall. Until this is corrected in AFATDS (V99.T and subsequent), Commanders must ensure that ballistic solutions obtained via AFATDS are appropriately verified by other approved methods. Commanders must thoroughly assess all missions and use all information available to them as part of their risk management process. Ensure all assigned soldiers are trained, certified and supervised to standard both individually and collectively. There is no substitute for proper leader supervision, continuous and ongoing risk management and on-the-spot corrections.



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